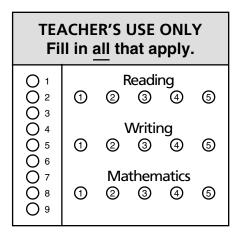
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Comprehensive System of Student Assessment Benchmark 2 Alaska Department of Education & Early Development Reading Practice Test



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Reading

Tirections

Read the short article "Fast Tracks." Then do the two sample questions.



Sample A

This passage is mostly about

- A how the cheetah wins races
- how people can run at impressive speeds
- how some animals can run faster than people
- how the ostrich can run up to 40 miles per hour

Sample B

Look at the picture next to the article. Which of the runners pictured is most likely to win a short race?

Using the information from the article, explain why you chose that runner.

Fast Tracks

The fastest person can run about 26 miles per hour. However, there are even faster speeds in the animal world. Did you know that the ostrich can run up to 40 miles per hour? The cheetah, however, wins the race. It can dash up to 60 miles per hour when running on flat ground for short distances. Now that's impressive!

Read the passage. Then do Numbers 1 through 6.





The winter I was twelve was an unusual one. My family moved from Bennington, Vermont to Lake Tahoe, California. Mom went off on a three-week trip to visit her mother in Michigan. My Uncle Lee moved in with us because he was between jobs. And I got a dog.

Dad let me pick her out at the neighborhood animal shelter. She was the smallest of the litter, but I thought the most beautiful.

"I hope you're not intending to use her for a watchdog," the animal technician said as we were filling out the paperwork.

"No, not really. Why do you ask?" Dad wanted to know.

"Of all the dogs here, I have never heard her make a sound. No yelps, no barks, nothing. Kind of like the cat got her tongue," and he laughed at his own joke. I thought about this for a moment. Had I picked a defective animal? What if I needed protection at my new school? But when she looked up at me with soft blue eyes, I knew I had made the right choice.

Going to a new school was difficult. I liked my teacher Ms. Samuels well enough, but I had a hard time making friends. I was shy and self-conscious. Every day I ate lunch alone, dreaming of spending time with my new dog, Coda, or playing chess with my uncle, or accompanying Dad to the restaurant he now owned.

After he had been with us a month, my uncle announced that he was going to teach me to snowboard. Growing up in Vermont it was hard to avoid learning how to ski, but I had been dying to learn snowboarding. It was an

exceptionally snowy winter, with plenty of opportunities. "Let's get out there and play," my eager uncle bellowed. A man of few words, he had never mentioned that he knew how to snowboard.

Uncle Lee and I started going out just about every day after school and Coda tagged along. She was a real snow dog, a malamute with a thick, beautiful black and white coat. While my uncle and I practiced our snowboarding techniques, she would play in the snow. She would roll in it, eat it, pick it up with her nose, and dig in it until she almost became part of the snowy mountain.

One particularly snowy day, I got separated from my uncle. I'm not sure how it happened, but suddenly I was snowboarding without him. I looked beside me expecting to see him, but all I saw was whiteness. I would have been frightened except I knew Coda was close by, and I assumed she knew her way home—that dog seemed to know everything else about being in the snow.

I figured the best thing to do would be to call for my uncle so I did. I called until I became hoarse. Then I realized that Coda was making no attempt to blaze a trail anywhere. She was playing like she always did. When I called to her, she seemed to think it was a game because she would look at me for a minute, run around in a circle, bury her head in the snow and come up with snow stuck to her nose and mouth, looking at me and wagging her tail.

The dog's silliness relaxed me, and I found myself snowboarding effortlessly. I had no doubt that my uncle would find me, so I just kept going. Unfortunately, my Olympic performance didn't last long. I had always wondered why my uncle had cautioned me to stay on the trails and away from the area around trees. Now I wondered no more as I lay in a hole some ten feet deep, snow just about

covering every part of me. The fall hadn't been painful, but it had shocked me. My feet were still attached to my snowboard, which was stuck in debris near the top of the hole. I was face down, and my hands were wedged up against my body. I had no idea how I was going to get out!

Without the use of my hands, I couldn't really dig. I tried to turn around, but there wasn't enough room to get right side up. I was stuck! I was almost ready to cry when suddenly I felt a tug on my jacket. At first I thought it might be a bear, but then I could hear the sound of Coda's breathing. I knew that I was too heavy for her to pull me entirely out, but if she could just help me to free a hand, maybe I could find something to hold onto or twist myself around.

Was Coda reading my mind? She yanked and pulled until I could move my arm again. With slightly more range of motion, I tried to dig out my other arm and pull myself around, but I wasn't making any real progress. Even from where I was, I could feel Coda beside me, motionless as the landscape around us. It was some comfort to know she was there.

It was then that I heard my uncle's voice calling. I knew my voice would be too muffled down in the hole with a bunch of snow on top of me, so I didn't even try to shout. Suddenly Coda began to bark. She barked and barked and barked.

Within minutes, Uncle Lee was helping me out. I don't know how long I was down in that hole, but it was too long. I was shivering and exhausted. All I could think was that if it hadn't been for Coda, my uncle would have never found me. Too tired to talk, I shivered some more. My uncle didn't scold me. He just gave me his jacket to put on over my own, said "Good dog, Coda," and we headed for home.

1 This story is mostly	about
------------------------	-------

- a child's relationship with his family
- a child whose dog saves him from a snowboarding accident
- a child who realizes that snowboarding is a dangerous sport
- a lonely child who moves to a new place and goes to a new school

Why was the winter in the story an unusual one for the narrator?

- The narrator was a better student.
- The narrator was shyer than usual.
- There were changes in the narrator's family life.
- ① There was more snow for the narrator to play in.

3 The narrator describes his snowboarding as an "Olympic performance" because the narrator

- was putting on a great show
- was fooling around in the snow
- was snowboarding on a racing course
- was doing really well at snowboarding

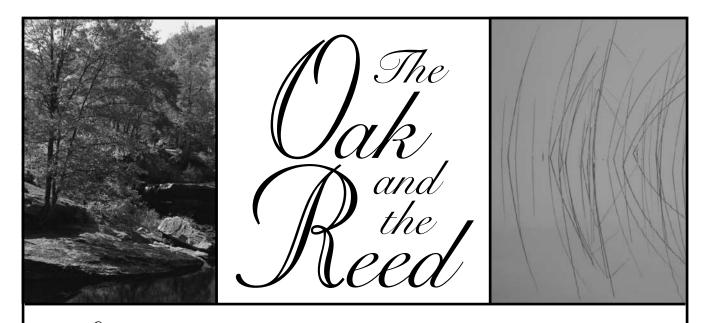
4 Which of the following statements shows the narrator's opinion?

- I had no doubt that my uncle would find me.
- My family moved from Bennington, Vermont to Lake Tahoe, California.
- © I looked beside me expecting to see him, but all I saw was whiteness.
- After he had been with us a month, my uncle announced that he was going to teach me to snowboard.

- At the beginning of the story, the narrator mentions that Coda never barks. This is important to the story because

 snow dogs usually bark
 - (a) this is a good type of dog for a child to have
 - later the dog's barking saves the child's life
 - there is no such thing as a dog that does not bark
- What are two ways that the child might have avoided falling into the hole? Use details from the story to explain your answer.

Read this retelling of a story by Aesop, a writer from over 2,000 years ago. Then do Numbers 7 through 12.



Ince there was a large oak growing by the side of a river. Near the oak grew a thin reed. When the breezes blew, only the leaves on the oak moved, but the reed moved all around.

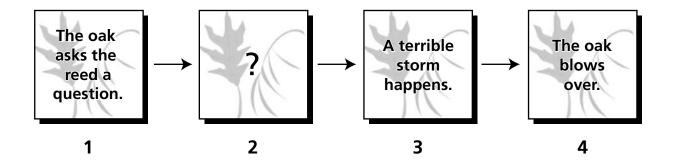
One day the oak said to the reed, "Why do you let the wind treat you like that? Stand up tall. Don't be pushed around!"

The reed answered, "Sometimes it is good to stand tall and still. Sometimes it is not. You think that I am losing to the wind, but I am not." The oak snorted, and looked away.

Then one day there was a terrible storm. The winds blew and blew, harder and harder. Finally, with a crash!, the oak blew over. The reed bent back and forth with the wind, but when the storm was over the reed stood tall again.

- 7 The style of this story is most like that of
 - (A) a fable
 - a myth
 - an epic
 - a biography
- 8 In the passage the oak tree snorts because
 - this is a sound that trees usually make
 - ® the tree thinks it is better than the reed
 - the tree does not agree with what the reed has said
 - ① the tree is showing that it is not afraid of the wind

Use the story diagram for Number 9.

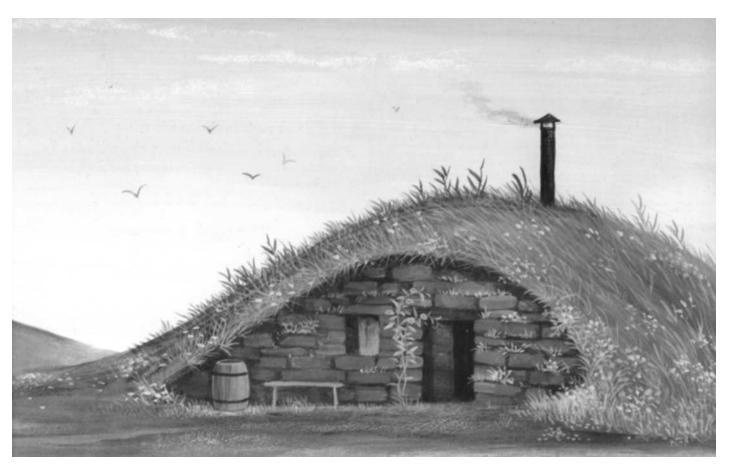


- **9** Which of these should go in Box 2?
 - A Breezes blow.
 - The reed stands tall again.
 - The reed defends its actions.
 - The oak and reed grow side by side.

10	Wh	nich of these statements best summarizes the moral of this story?					
	A	It is always best to be tall and straight.					
	B	It is better to be flexible than stubborn.					
	©	It is wise to be careful when dealing with tall trees.					
	D	It is better to know your own strengths than those of your friends.					
11	Thi	is passage takes place					
	A	in a field					
	B	on a prairie					
	©	at the beach					
		on a riverbank					
12	Exp	plain why the reed knows that it is not losing to the wind. Use details from the passage to					
	support your answer.						

rections

Read the passage. Then do Numbers 13 through 18.



Dakota Dugout

BY ANN TURNER

Homesteading demanded incredible mental and physical strength, yet many young couples committed themselves to the life wholeheartedly in order to ensure a better future for their families.

Tell you about the prairie years? I'll tell you, child, how it was.

When Matt wrote, "Come!" I packed up all I had, cups and pots and dresses and rope, even Grandma's silver boot hook, and rode the clickety train to a cave in the earth, Matt's cave. Built from sod, you know, with a special iron plow that sliced the long earth strips. Matt cut them into bricks, laid them up, dug into a hill that was our first home.

¹sod: grass covered soil held together by the tangled roots of the soil. The sod was cut into brick-like shapes and used by pioneers to build houses on the plains. Alaska Natives also sometimes lived in sod houses.

Go On



I cried when I saw it. No sky came into that room, only a paper window that made the sun look greasy. Dirt fell on our bed, snakes sometimes, too, and the buffalo hide door could not keep out the wind or the empty cries in the long grass.

The birds visited me, there was no one else, with Matt all day in the fields. A hawk came, snake in its claws, a heron flapped by with wings like sails, and a sparrow jabbered² the day long on a gray fence post. I jabbered back.

Winter came sudden. Slam-bang! the ground was iron, cattle breath turned to ice, froze their noses to the ground. We lost twelve in a storm and the wind scoured the dugout, *whish*-hush, *whish*-hush.

Spring, child, was teasing slow then quick, water booming in the lake, geese like yarn in the sky, green spreading faster than fire, and the wind blowing *shoosh*-hush, *shoosh*-hush.

First summer we watched the corn grow, strode around the field clapping hands. We saw dresses, buggies, gold in that grain until one day a hot wind baked it dry as an oven, *ssst-ssst*, *ssst-ssst*.

Matt sat and looked two whole days, silent and long.

Come fall we snuggled like beavers in our burrow, new grass on the floor, willows on our roof under the earth. I pasted newspaper on the walls, set the bread to bake on the coals, and the wind was quiet.

Corn grew finally, we got our dresses, buggies, some gold, built a clapboard³ house with windows like suns, floors I slipped on, and the empty sound of too many rooms. Didn't think I'd miss the taste of earth in the air. Now the broom went *whisp*-hush, and the clock tocked like a busy heart. Talking brings it near again, the sweet taste of new bread in a Dakota dugout, how the grass whispered like an old friend, how the earth kept us warm.

Sometimes the things we start with are best.

²jabber: chatter, talk nonsense

³clapboard: overlapping boards

- The introduction to the passage says: "Homesteading demanded incredible mental and physical strength, yet many young couples committed themselves to the life wholeheartedly in order to ensure a better future for their families." What does wholeheartedly mean?
 - A easily
 - B lovingly
 - © completely
 - dramatically
- 14 The narrator cried when she first saw her new sod home because
 - (A) it was not what she expected
 - she was angry at her husband
 - She was happy to be on the prairie
 - (i) she wished she had helped her husband build it
- 15 The narrator talks to the birds on the prairie because
 - She is really fond of birds
 - she has no one else to talk to
 - (c) she wants to understand them
 - she would rather talk to birds than humans
- 16 What happens to the corn the first summer they are on the plains?
 - A it does not grow
 - it is ruined by rain
 - it dries up and dies
 - o it produces a huge crop

17	When she talks about the growing corn, the narrator says that she "saw dresses, buggies, gold in that grain." This probably means that								
	A	she was so lonely she saw things							
	B	she thought of the corn as a way to make money							
		there were people with carriages going through the fields							
		one day the fields would become towns with roads and people							
	How is life different for the narrator at the beginning of her time on the prairie and at the end of the time she describes? Use details from the passage to explain your answer.								



KEY FOR MULTIPLE-CHOICE ITEMS:

Sample A. **C**

- 1. **B**
- 2. **C**
- 3. **D**
- 4. **A**
- 5. **C**
- 7. **A**
- 8. **C**
- 9. **C**
- 10. **B**
- 11. D
- 13. **C**
- 14. **A**
- 15. **B**
- 16. **C**
- 17. **B**



CONSTRUCTED-RESPONSE QUESTIONS:

Sample B

Look at the picture next to the article. Which of the runners pictured is most likely to win a short race? Using the information from the article, explain why you chose that runner.

Exemplary Response:

The cheetah is most likely to win a short race.

I chose the cheetah as the winner of the short race because the article says that it runs up to 60 miles per hour on flat ground for short distances.

Score Points: 2 points possible

- 1 point for cheetah
- 1 point for supporting evidence from the article

Item 6

What are <u>two</u> ways that the child might have avoided falling into the hole? Use details from the story to explain your answer.

Exemplary Response:

- The child could have asked his uncle why he kept warning him to stay away from the trees when snowboarding. This would have been better than waiting until he actually fell in a hole to figure it out for himself.
- The child could have listened to the uncle, because the uncle had a lot more experience snowboarding.
- The child could have paid more attention. The child thinks he is doing an "Olympic performance." The child is not looking for possible dangers.
- The child could have stayed put when he first missed his uncle, instead of continuing to snowboard by himself.

Score Points: 2 points possible

- 1 point for any two of the above exemplary responses with a supporting detail from the story
- 1 point for identifying any two ways that the child may have avoided falling into the hole but without supporting details from the story



Item 12

Explain why the reed knows that it is not losing to the wind. Use details from the passage to support your answer.

Exemplary Response:

Because the wind can bend the reed, but it knows that it will survive the storm and not be knocked over like the oak.

Score Points: 2 points possible

- 1 point for explanation—the reed knows it will not be damaged by the storm
- 1 point for detail such as it bends and doesn't break

Item 18

How is life different for the narrator at the beginning of her time on the prairie and at the end of the time she describes? Use details from the passage to explain your answer.

Exemplary Response:

In the beginning of the passage, the narrator is sad and lonely. She is living in an ugly dirt house, with little sun, and life is hard. The first year all their corn dies and they don't make any money. At the end, things are better. They have enough money to build a new clapboard house with real windows. She gets things she wants like dresses.

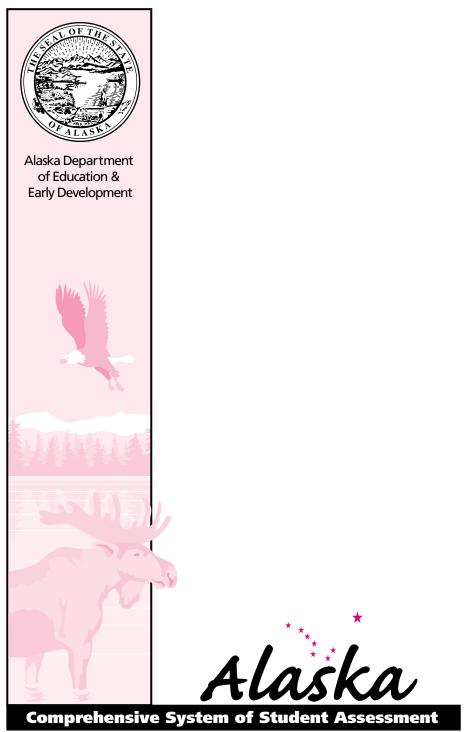
Score Points: 4 points possible

- 1 point for the idea that in the beginning things were hard and the narrator was lonely
- 1 point for the idea that things got easier and some of their goals were met
- 1 point for one supporting detail for each part of the answer (2 points total)

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